

down my arms, a thousand satellites

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by [crabnap](#)

Summary

“How do you feel?” George asked, low and soft.

“A little better,” Dream said. “Can you call me baby again?”

He really didn’t know where that had come from, the warmth and closeness pulling his thoughts straight off his tongue, but George’s mouth parted sweetly and his cheeks were bright pink and Dream didn’t regret a thing.

“Why?” George breathed, smiling a little, like he was trying not to but couldn’t quite manage it.

Dream was tingly all over. “Because I like it.”

Dream gets sick and George, to his amazement, is actually very soft and caring about it. Surely nothing life-changing will come of this.

Notes

Tw: mention of vomiting, but it doesn’t actually happen

HEY GUYS IM ON BREAK AT WORK HERE"S MY LIL NOTE

hi hi hi everyone long time no see!!! i'm so happy to be back and to give you this fic which is dedicated to [sapphody](#) because i adore sapph so much. i hope you enjoy this one and as always beta creds go to my love [moon](#). see you in the end note! <3

title is from "touch" by sleeping at last because i thought it was pretty :))

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

"George, everything hurts."

Dream collapsed backwards onto the living room couch, and maybe he was being a little too dramatic, but he had a cold and his throat hurt and everything sucked. He stuck his hand above his head to poke at George's leg.

"So you're really sick?" George put his phone down on the side table. "It wasn't just a headache?"

"Sick. I have a fever and everything. To be fair, it's only like, 99.5, but still. This sucks."

The late morning sun was warm on his stomach where it fell through the window, making everything feel sweaty and bright. George turned in his seat, and Dream could feel him examining him.

"Oh. I'm sorry." His hand landed, strangely, on the couch cushion next to Dream's head.

Dream strained his neck to look back, a sharp ache making itself home in the top of his spine. "You should be." He sniffled for effect. "It's awful. My throat hurts really bad."

It wasn't like he really expected George to care all that much, just some acknowledgment of his pain was enough. It wouldn't make him feel better, but it would make him *feel* better – you know? Maybe George would even be thoughtful enough to make him a cup of tea.

What he hadn't been expecting was for George to move his hand, carefully, from the couch cushion to run fingers through his hair, massaging a little at his scalp and then just resting there, looking down at him with his big brown eyes all concerned.

Which was exactly what happened, and Dream's heart did about a million backflips.

He swallowed, his scalp tingling like crazy. "George?"

It was stupid to call him out like that, would probably make him shrink away like a scared cat, but Dream was incapable of anything more coherent at the moment.

"I'm sorry you feel bad," and George wasn't pulling away, was letting the pads of his fingers rub even deeper, "is there anything I can do to help? I can make you something?"

George spoke so gently and his eyebrows creased in the middle and wow, this was so much better than Dream was expecting. He was melting in it. He was a goddamn pat of butter in the sun.

"Uh– yeah, thank you. Can you make me some chicken soup, please? We have cans in the pantry."

"I know where the soup is, Dream." George's voice was still so soft, even as he laughed a little and pulled his hand back. "Sure, I'll–"

“Wait.” Oh, Dream was a weak, weak man. His hand flew up to George’s immediately, keeping him from leaving. “Can– uh.”

He didn’t even know what he could say here that wasn’t completely pathetic. George looked down at him expectantly.

“I– nevermind. Sorry.” Dream let go of him.

But instead of moving, George started scratching at his scalp again. “Do you not want me to leave?”

Well, yeah, but it was embarrassing to say that out loud. Dream felt like he was blushing, which meant he probably was. Maybe he could blame it on the fever. “I just. It feels– nice. For my headache.”

George hummed, dragging soft nails down to the nape of his neck and back up, making him shiver. His dark eyes flicked over Dream’s face, observing him, attentive to the touches that made him react. It was so unlike the normal version of George that it was almost terrifying.

George liked space. He liked tucking into himself on the recliner, safely away from where Dream and Sapnap would sprawl on the couch in a nest of blankets. He liked watching from afar. Dream learned, when George moved to Florida, that it was never playful touches with him – it was playful looks, words, the way he rested his chin on his hand to watch Sapnap make a fool out of himself. But now, there was this, and it was like Dream was given an entirely different side of him. It was impossible to predict what he would do next.

George pressed his fingers into Dream’s skull, just a little, so that his head tipped up and their gazes met again. “How about you come sit at the breakfast bar while I make your soup?” he asked. “Does that sound okay?”

Dream had to swallow when George’s eyes searched his, the scrape against his sore throat making him wince. George caught it, eyes tripping down to his Adam’s apple. It was so achingly vulnerable to be watched like this.

“Okay,” Dream said, eventually, because he didn’t know what else to say, and because it sounded like a good idea. Being close sounded more appealing than the comfort of any bed or couch.

George smiled a little and stood, helping Dream to his feet with fingertips glancing off the backs of his elbows. In the kitchen, Dream dropped onto a stool and shivered when his wrists touched the cool countertop.

George emerged from the pantry with a can of Campbell’s chicken noodle soup. “You’re an idiot for getting sick, by the way. You should have taken yesterday off.”

George sounded a little more like his normal self. Dream relaxed into it. “I had shit to do, though. I get stress headaches all the time, I didn’t think it was a big deal.”

“I don’t think getting stress headaches all the time is a chill thing, Dream.”

“It’s just part of the job.”

“You’re a dumbass.”

Dream huffed, wedging his feet up on one of the bars under the stool. “I was editing *your* stupid video, idiot, you should be thanking me for working yesterday.”

“Oh, yeah, because I care more about some dumb video than your health.” George poured the soup into a saucepan and turned the stove on.

“Okay, well, obviously you *don’t*, but still.”

“No, no, I think you had a point there.” George turned, tapping a thoughtful finger on his chin.

“Dream, or money. No, yeah, I care more about the money. Give me clout, Dream. Go work on my video right now or I’m dumping this soup in the trash.”

Dream wheezed and regretted it instantly. “*George.*” He choked around a cough. “You’re such an—“ more choking, “idiot.”

George came around the side of the breakfast bar and leaned back against the countertop, in front of him, and then he put both hands on Dream’s chest and started massaging circles into his collarbones. Dream stared, shocked.

“Obviously you’re more important than any video,” George said, so soft it felt wrong to hear. Like it wasn’t meant to have reached his ears.

“Who are you and what have you done with George?” Dream joked weakly. He cleared his throat, still catching his breath, George’s palms so warm and distracting through the thin fabric of his t-shirt.

George gave him a cheeky little smile and said, “I’m Candice.”

“Wh—“

“Can dis dick fit in your—“

“Oh, you motherfucker.”

George laughed, dropping his hands from Dream’s chest, but instead of leaving he picked up Dream’s hand and started rubbing at his wrist, right where he always complained about it being sore from hours of holding his mouse. It was startling, and it made his eyes well up a little, though he would never admit that. George was giving him whiplash, here – how he talked like himself but he was here, in Dream’s space, touching him almost reverently. Dream was sick, but he didn’t need to be treated like this. Why was George treating him like this? He could hardly breathe through the intimacy of it.

“Do you want any medicine?” George asked, focusing on his wrist, “Tylenol, or anything?”

Dream watched the way his hair fell over his eyes, each dark strand and the little waves they gathered into. “Uh, no thank you.”

He wondered if it would be soft. He wondered what George would do, if he reached up with his free hand and carded his fingers through it. He would push the waves back from George’s forehead to see his eyes again, his eyelashes where they brushed against his cheeks, his widow’s peak.

“You’re staring,” George murmured.

“Oh. Sorry, I—” Dream looked around dumbly at the kitchen, searching for something to say. The phlegm in his throat caught against his breath and he choked, coughing and spluttering.

“Dream!” George rubbed his back as he hacked out a lung. “Are you okay?”

“Yeah.” Dream took a grating breath. “Ow.”

“You poor thing,” George said, and it was the voice he used when he was watching a particularly sad animal video, and he had started giving Dream little scratches on the back of his head. It was a lot to take in.

“I’m okay,” Dream said, trying to clear the itch from his throat. “Can I get some water, please?”

“Yeah, of course.”

George walked back around the counter and got Dream a glass, stirring the soup as he went, and Dream missed him a little more than what was normal and sane. With the phlegm in his throat making it hard to breathe, Dream almost got onto his aching feet to walk over and cling to him.

George just looked so lovely and soft standing in his kitchen, the back of his hair sticking out at an odd angle, making Dream soup. It was such a loving thing to do and George’s shoulders sloped so mundanely in the light and Dream wanted to walk up and squeeze him, touch his shirt, pat down his hair until it looked a little less adorable.

George came back, though, so quickly, a glass of cold water in his hand and a sweet smile on his face. He leaned in front of Dream again and passed him the glass. “Here you go.”

Dream took it and drank deeply, his knee pressed to George’s hip to keep himself grounded. “Thank you.”

“Do you feel any better?” George had his other wrist now, kneading into it with the same gentle care.

“Yeah, a lot better. Thank you, George, for...for taking care of me, and everything.”

“It’s no problem.” George worked up his inner forearm, into the muscles that made his fingers curl involuntarily. “Someone’s got to take care of you. You’re too dumb to do it yourself, and I couldn’t possibly leave you in the hands of *Stinknap*. He’d probably get you McDonald’s.”

“Hey, give him some credit.” Dream grinned. “He’d get me the apple slices, because they’re healthy.”

“Oh, yes, I forgot,” George shook his head, smiling, “McDonald’s apple slices are the ultimate cure-all. They’re like totems of undying, but like, for real life.”

“Could you imagine?”

“What do you mean, imagine? I’m telling the truth, Dream. I heard if you eat three apple slices in front of a mirror, Ronald McDonald himself appears behind you and grants you a wish.”

Dream wheezed, bringing on more grating coughs. “Shut up, you fucking idiot,” he rasped, all phlegmy and gross. “You’re gonna kill me.”

George just watched, smiling, as Dream coughed himself red. He should have been grossed out – Dream would have been grossed out – but he just looked a little fond. A warm palm pressed flat to the front of Dream’s chest, another rubbing up and down his back. It was amazing how fast that little touch soothed the ache in his lungs.

“I hate you,” he said, but he was leaning into George’s hands.

“I’m sure you do.”

“Very much.”

“Uh huh.”

Dream let out a long sigh, finally able to breathe right.

George looked over his shoulder at the stove. “Can you survive without me for a moment while I stir the soup?”

Brain to mouth, Dream said, “No.”

George laughed, surprised. “Okay, well, you’ll have to unless you want burnt soup. Which do you prefer?”

“Burnt soup,” Dream said, because George was allowing him to be like this, because he almost seemed to enjoy it.

George leveled him with a look, smiling secretly in the corners of his mouth.

“Fine.” Dream swayed out of his touch. “Go do the soup. Whatever.”

“*Do* the soup, Dream?” George raised an eyebrow as he walked away.

“Shut up, you know what I mean.”

“No, I really don’t,” George said, getting carried away. “I mean, I’d want to take it out to dinner first, but it *is* dinner. Is that insensitive? Is it cannibalism if I buy the soup dinner?”

“You are so fucking stupid.”

“No really, Dream, I’m worried now. Do you think I’ve offended the soup? Should I apologize?”

“Just stir the soup, George.”

“Wow. You are twisted. That’s fucked up of you, Dream.”

Dream leaned forward on the counter, pressing the base of his palms into his eyes. “You’re an idiot.”

“Fine, I’m stirring it. Are you happy now? Look at how upset the soup is.”

“It’s not upset.”

“It is. It’s crying. Can’t you see it?”

“That’s steam.”

“It’s tears, Dream.”

“My head hurts too much for this.”

“How do you think the soup feels?”

Dream dropped his hands, leveling George with an unimpressed stare. George just smirked at him.

“George, if you don’t stop I’m genuinely going to feel guilty about eating this soup.”

George scoffed. “Really?”

“Maybe.”

“Okay, fine, you big baby. Here, the soup’s ready, do you want me to spoon feed it to you?”

George poured the soup into a big bowl.

Dream watched his hands, the gentle way he touched things. “You’re such an idiot.”

“Mm, okay. Here, it’s gonna be hot.” George slid the soup across the counter, following it around to sit on the stool next to Dream’s. He sat close enough to touch. Dream put his hands on the bowl instead.

He took a spoonful, blew on it and carefully sipped it, closing his eyes to better feel the warmth travel down his throat. “Thank you,” he said, quiet.

“You’re welcome,” George said, matching his tone.

The whole room felt warmer now that George was sitting next to him, but maybe that was just the soup. Dream took slow bites and leaned subtly towards him, the quiet taking some of the sharpness out of his headache.

After a minute or so, George started playing with his hair again. It wasn’t much, just some gentle scratches at the nape of his neck, but it made Dream melt down into his seat. The base of George’s hand rested on his shoulder, the warmth of his skin radiating through Dream’s t-shirt. He was barely paying attention to the soup anymore, trying not to move his head too much or sniffle too loudly.

George was staring at his profile. “You are so silly,” he said, almost whispering.

Dream took a bite of soup, not knowing what to say to that, not knowing if he should say anything.

A thumb brushed along the shell of his ear. “Silly.”

It took everything in Dream not to shiver.

George sighed, world-weary. “What will we ever do with you, Dream?”

“You could start making me food more often.”

“No,” George deliberated, “no, you’re too silly for that. We’ll have to think of something else.”

Dream took another bite of soup, wincing as his throat went raw in a particular spot when he swallowed.

George’s knuckles brushed around to the side of his neck. “Hurts?”

He nodded.

“I’m sorry, is there anything I can do?”

Dream spoke carefully to not irritate his throat. “Could I get some Tylenol, please?”

“You should have taken some earlier,” George said, getting up to find the bottle. He came back,

dropping two pills into Dream's palm. As Dream took them, he stroked his head with a warm hand, almost pulling him into his chest. "So silly."

Dream looked up at him, feeling small and safe. "Is silly your new favorite word?"

George's eyes were soft. "It's just you. It describes you so well. I don't think I've ever heard a word that fits you better."

"What about idiot?"

"Okay, that one too. You're my silly little idiot."

Dream's heart warmed over. "Your?"

And now George was swallowing, looking away at the pot still on the stove. "Uh— well. Our. Mine and Sapnap's. You're our idiot."

Dream stared up at him, trying to decipher this, the twitch to his neck and the lightest pink at the tips of his ears. He seemed embarrassed. Maybe he had just misspoken.

"Are you done with your soup?" George asked, before Dream could say anything.

"Uh, yeah. Thank you for making it."

"Of course."

George gave him one last scratch before picking up the soup bowl and bringing it to the sink, leaving Dream to sit with hands that felt too empty. He was always the one cooking, doing the dishes, cleaning up around the kitchen. It felt weird to do nothing, to watch George do it all for him. He couldn't tell if he liked it or not.

The soup had made Dream's nose runny, and after the tenth sniffle George turned to look at him.

"You should go lie down, Dream," he said, wearing a ridiculously large pair of rubber gloves to wash the soup pot.

"What about you?" Dream asked. It was a dumb question with an even dumber meaning hidden underneath, but George seemed to understand.

"I'll come join you as soon as I'm done. That stool can't be very comfortable, go find somewhere you can get some rest."

And Dream went, like a little puppy dog, because the fact that George was coming to give him more head scratches and wasn't even making fun of him for it had turned him into putty. He went up to his room, knowing George would find him there after checking the living room couch, and nuzzled down under his comforter.

—

He had almost fallen asleep when the door creaked open, his eyes so heavy he didn't even bother to open them. George crept in slowly, quietly. The sound of his clothes moving was the only thing that gave away where he was. Dream wondered if he would leave him to rest, but then the mattress dipped in front of him.

"Hey, sleepy," George whispered, barely audible over the sound of him getting under the covers.

Dream, still fuzzy around the edges, decided it would be easier to continue acting dead to the world than to let George know he was awake.

When he didn't answer, George sighed. And then he slipped a hand into Dream's hair.

Dream made a soft noise on instinct, snuggling closer in that groggy quest for warmth. He heard George breathe out a laugh, the fingers in his hair making swirling patterns over his scalp. He was tingling all over. The Tylenol must have been working, because he could barely feel his sore throat or headache anymore.

He almost pouted when George's hand left his hair, but then there was shifting and their knees were touching and George's fingers brushed, barely there, against the side of his face.

Dream's heart made a loop from his chest down to his stomach and back again. He was wide awake now, hyper-focused on the track of George's fingers as they moved from his cheek to his temple, across his brow bone and down the slope of his nose. It was like he was mapping him, feeling out his edges. It was so very hard to stay still.

His nose started to run again, and he couldn't control the way it twitched, the little snuffle that revealed him to be at least a little aware of his surroundings. But George didn't stop, just moved his fingers away from Dream's nose and back to his cheek.

"I'm sorry, baby," George whispered.

Wait, what? Dream's brain short-circuited. *Baby baby baby.* George had called him baby. Was it a sickness thing? Would he do it again?

And then, incredibly, George thumbed at the snot tipping over the edge of his nostril, moving to presumably wipe it on his own shirt.

Oh my god. Dream almost broke down crying right then and there. It was such an intense act of love, of unconditional love, that he almost couldn't handle it. Touching someone else's snot was so gross, was something that Dream would never do intentionally, but George did it like he didn't even have to think. Like Dream's comfort was the most important thing to him. Dream could still feel the imprint of George's thumb on his upper lip when he settled his hand back on Dream's face, now a full palm resting warm on his jaw.

What was happening? What world had Dream woken up in, where George called him baby and wiped away his snot and touched his face like he was painting it? He was used to distance, so much of it, distance across the living room and between words and their meanings. He was used to walls in front of George's face, behind his eyes. This was so, so different from that.

Dream cracked his eyes open, not enough to be noticeable but enough to see the shape of George's body through his eyelashes, and he was so much closer than Dream had anticipated. He was on his side, one arm tucked under his head and the other reaching between them, and he was looking right at Dream.

As an experiment, just to see what would happen, Dream snuggled into his neck.

And George *shivered*.

It was so much better than he had thought it would be, how George's arms pulled him in instantly, eagerly, how the skin of his neck was soft and warm and secret. Dream pressed in so he was flush there from the tip of his nose to his forehead, breathing in the smell of George, which was the smell of the bathroom after he had just gotten out of the shower – like soap and oranges.

George wedged his shin between Dream's knees, a socked heel brushing down the line of his calf. It was heavenly. When Dream curled his fingers into the fabric of George's t-shirt, George sprawled hands across his back.

"Baby," George breathed, like reflex, like a thought spilling from his lips.

Dream's chest bloomed. He made a little noise, *I heard you*, and tilted his head so his eyelid pressed against the side of George's neck. *I heard you, and I like this. I like it so much I want to crawl into your chest to feel you say it from the inside.*

George's hands bunched up the fabric at the back of Dream's t-shirt. He seemed to stop breathing for a moment, his heartbeat pounding through his carotid, and then he exhaled, long and slow, and his body relaxed into Dream. He brought one hand up to Dream's hair, dragging his knuckles up and down, and drew shapes on his back with his other palm.

It didn't take long for Dream to fall asleep.

He woke up alone, which was disappointing, but he also woke up without the throbbing pain in his head. His throat was still tender, his nose annoyingly stuffy, but some of the sick feeling that waterlogged his body had drained away, leaving him more awake than he had felt all day.

It was around five in the evening, which meant he had slept a little over three hours. He wondered what George was up to.

It was hard to forget the way George's skin had felt, hot on hot, the line of his jaw pressing into Dream's forehead. It had felt surreal, being that close to him, like Dream had been cuddled up to someone else and pretending it was him, but then he would catch a whiff of George's shampoo or hear his breaths fall through his nose in the way that Dream knew, in the way that was only George, and it would crash back into him like a speeding train. George's hands, that always held things with so much tenderness, were a little sweaty on his arm and the back of his neck. George's shirt that he had gotten two sizes too big was pulled to the side, exposing the delicate knob where his collarbone met his shoulder. George was right there – and Dream was right here, touching him.

Except he wasn't anymore, because the sun was lower in the sky out Dream's bedroom window and his mouth tasted like sleep and George wasn't here. Dream scratched his ass, like the dignified man he was, because his door was closed and there were only trees out the window and George wasn't here.

He got up once the curiosity got too strong – what was George doing instead of cuddling him? What could be more important than that? He checked George's room, but it was empty. Maybe he had just needed some water and was on his way back. Dream padded down the stairs to the kitchen.

"I'm telling you, man, it's the best thing you'll ever eat. Just trust me."

That was Sapnap, hovering over George's shoulder, where they both looked down at a plate of *something*. Dream couldn't tell what it was from this far away.

"It looks like cat puke," George said.

“Don’t look at it then. Just eat it, I promise you’ll like it.”

“I don’t want to. It’s gross.”

“Stop being a little bitch.”

“It’s making me nauseous, Sapnap.”

“No it is not.”

“It is. I could throw up right now, just thinking about eating this. I’ll throw up all over you.”

“You’ve gotta be fucking kidding me. Just *eat* the—“

“Dream.” George was looking at him, something in his face and his voice gone all quiet. He slid the plate off to the side and rounded the counter. “How are you feeling?”

Dream glanced at Sapnap, who looked a little confused, and gave him a nod. “Better, actually. I think the nap helped a lot. What are you guys talking about?”

“Corned beef hash.” Sapnap nudged the plate towards him. It did look like cat puke. “You’ve gotta try it, dude, it’s literally insane. It’s ludicrous how good it is.”

“I think I’m good.”

“C’mon, just a little bit. I thought you were a ‘try everything once’ kinda guy.”

“Not with shit that looks like that.”

“That’s what *I* told him,” George said, leaning his hip against the countertop. He was still looking at Dream, but whatever had been in his voice before was gone. This was the George he was used to.

“Yeah well, you’re a little pussy bitch,” Sapnap said, and was promptly jabbed in the chest. A mild scuffle took place which gave Dream a chance to sit down at the breakfast bar, and then Sapnap let go of the back of George’s shirt and looked at him. “Hey, you look like shit. What happened?”

Dream nudged the cat puke on a plate as far away from himself as he could. “I have a cold, I think, but I’m feeling a little better right now.”

“I made soup,” George said proudly.

“Yeah, George nursed me back to health.” Dream looked at him, but eye contact was weird. George’s expression was so much more blank than it should have been.

Sapnap snickered. “Nurse Gogy? I’m surprised you’re not in the hospital by now, Dream. Do you remember the treatment I got when I had that ear infection? Absolutely ridiculous.”

“You would have bled all over my couch,” George said.

“You are literally such a bitch.”

“I thought he did a pretty good job,” Dream said, feeling a little gooey in the middle. “He was very sweet.”

George looked at the corned beef hash like there was something very intriguing about it.

Sapnap rolled his eyes. “Great, I guess I should have expected that. If I get sick though, I’m making you take care of me. George has lost that privilege forever.”

George snorted. “Fine. I don’t want your germs.”

Sapnap mimicked him in a high-pitched voice. “‘I don’t want your germs,’ shut the fuck up.”

Dream chewed on the inside of his cheek as they continued to bicker. It was so *normal*, conversations like this, and that should have been comforting to him but it just felt wrong. George felt wrong. Or maybe it was him – maybe he was the problem here, because George had gone back to their usual dynamic like it was nothing while Dream felt a bit stranded in the middle.

George had treated him with so much care, so much *vulnerability*, in a way. What had happened to that touch, that softness to his voice? Was it just hiding inside him all the time, waiting for something to let it out? Dream didn’t know. Because he had felt it before, had witnessed it firsthand, but looking at George right now he felt like he could have imagined the whole thing. He couldn’t tell that this George, the one who was snarking at Sapnap with a haughty purse to his lips, could whisper *baby* so sweetly against the shell of his ear. It felt like something that could only happen in his fantasies, in those moments when he was at his weakest, on the verge of sleep and a little too lonely to police his thoughts. But it had happened, he knew. He almost believed it.

“Whatever, dude,” Sapnap said, cradling the plate of corned beef hash against his stomach like a baby. “I’m gonna go eat my *delicious* meal, and you’re not allowed to have any.”

George put his hands up. “Fine by me.” He watched Sapnap go, then turned to Dream. “Can you believe that idiot?”

Dream shook his head. “I guess that’s why they call him Stinknap.”

“Oh my god.” George laughed, putting a bag of pretzels back in the pantry. “You’re right. That’s why he smells like poo all the time – he’s eating *shit*.”

Dream chuckled with him, but it felt empty. They were in the same places as earlier – him at the breakfast bar, George by the stove – but they could have been entirely different people. He wanted George to touch his chest again. He wondered if George would do it if he went into another coughing fit. His headache was starting to come back, his throat would probably be raw again soon.

“George?” he asked, but he didn’t know what he wanted to say. He wanted to talk about earlier, but could he even bring that up? It felt wrong, like he was breaking some sort of code.

George looked up at him expectantly, normally, *blankly*. Wrongly.

“I, um, I wanted to talk to you.” He should have planned this out better.

George tipped his head. “Okay, what about?”

“Well, uh…”

He could have thought of something, but at the end of the day, Dream was a weak man. A weak man who craved more of that George from earlier, the one who looked at him like he was seeing through to the middle of him. He chopped his breath into a resounding cough, ignoring the pain that sliced down his throat.

And George, like instinct, swayed forward into the counter towards him. “Are you okay?”

“Yeah, just—” More coughs ripped through him, real ones this time, a product of the healing he had just undone. “Sorry— ow.”

The pain wasn't fake, but the satisfaction he felt when George rounded the counter wasn't quite innocent. It was fine. This was fine. He could worry about morals later when George wasn't getting in his space, hovering hands over his shoulders like he had forgotten how this worked.

“Can you—” Dream took George's hands and brought them to his neck, not touching but close enough to imply it.

It was selfish of him, greedy, but George gave his touch like he had been waiting for Dream to take it from him. Like he wanted it. His thumbs pressed gingerly under Dream's lymph nodes and rubbed small circles while the rest of his fingers curled around to cradle the back of Dream's head. It was heavenly, even as the pain rang in Dream's throat, because George was here and Dream was holding his small wrists in both hands.

“What did you want to talk about?” George asked, quiet, because Dream now knew that his voice went soft whenever he was touching him.

“Not important.” Dream shook his head slightly, not enough to lose George's touch but enough for him to feel it. “Later.”

His heart thumped harder when he felt that George's hands were trembling. This was something different – not quite the way they were a few hours ago. George wasn't looking him in the eye.

“Are you okay?” Dream asked, before he could think it through.

George laughed, sounding a little out of breath. “Shouldn't I be asking you that?”

“I guess.” He cleared his throat. The sharp sting was starting to annoy him now.

George's fingers jumped at the sound, then settled back on his skin. “I'm fine,” he said. “Why do you ask?”

Dream swallowed, subconsciously, before he realized that George could feel it. “You just seem nervous, I guess. I don't know.”

George's eyes flicked up to his, large and dark, before staring back down at his collar. “Nervous?”

“Yeah.” Dream grazed his thumbs down the veins in George's wrists, watching his jaw work at the inside of his cheek. “Like, about this. You were doing it earlier, I don't know what's different.”

This seemed to be too much for George, because he dropped his hands entirely and tucked them against his stomach. It happened so fast that Dream let his wrists slip right out of his grasp.

“You're—” George scoffed, turning his shoulders away, “I don't know what you're talking about.”

“It's okay, George.” Dream reached for his arm, but he twitched away.

“No, it's— I don't know what you're saying, Dream. You should take some more Tylenol, you don't sound good.”

He walked away like Dream was burning him, pulling the bottle of pills out of the cupboard and setting it on the counter.

“I have to go – do some editing, and stuff. I'll see you later.”

And then he was gone, and Dream felt shittier than he had all day.

The headache had gotten so much worse, Dream's throat stinging like hot coals, and maybe it was because he never took the Tylenol but that wasn't the relief he needed right now. Lying on the couch, his hot face pressed into the cushions, Dream didn't want anything that wasn't George.

Maybe he was delirious. Maybe his fever had come back. He should really just take the pills, but they felt measly in comparison to George's hands. Also, his throat hurt too much to consider swallowing them. If he really got down to the marrow of it, maybe he wanted to feel like shit. Maybe he thought that if he felt bad enough, George would appear and take him in his arms and make it all better.

It had only been an hour since their conversation, but it felt like more. He was swaying in semi-consciousness, trying to nap, but he had already slept so much today that his body was resisting it. He wondered what George was doing. He wondered what he had said earlier to make him leave – where he had gone wrong. He wondered about a lot of things and he understood very little, the splitting ache in his bones not doing much to help.

After another twenty minutes of wallowing in misery, Dream was at the end of his rope. He was uncomfortable, barely lucid, and very needy, and it seemed that the combination of those things was enough to drive him to his feet and up the carpeted stairs.

Before he knew what he was doing, he was at George's room, knocking and pushing the door open before he even got a response, and when he saw George lying on his bed scrolling through TikToks he collapsed in an undignified heap on top of him.

“Dream!”

George's hands flapped at his back and then he was pushed, ungracefully, until the world tilted and he was on his side.

“Dream, what the hell? Are you okay?” Fingertips flew to his face, cool to the touch, making him shiver. “Jesus, you don't look good.”

“Don't feel good,” he mumbled, feeling like a big dumb baby. He shouldn't have done this to himself. The room spun woozily and there was this thumping under his skin that wouldn't go away, this deep-seated ache he could feel in his bones. He was such an idiot, barging into George's room all sick and gross and expecting him to fix it. It was selfish of him, especially when he could have avoided all of this by just taking the Tylenol.

But, for some reason, George wasn't scolding him. He didn't even seem upset, or grossed out, or anything he should have been. He was holding Dream's face in both hands, trying to catch his eye.

Dream struggled to focus. George wasn't blurry, but it was hard to see him straight-on. He blinked a few times.

George tapped his cheek. “Dream? Look at me, baby.”

The rush that went through him was so sweet, but it only made him woozier. He willed away a

spark of nausea.

“Don’ call me that,” he said, which wasn’t what he meant at all.

George froze, his touch gone rigid. “Sorry– I, sorry.”

“No, I mean,” Dream swallowed glass, trying to get his vision to settle, “makes me all dizzy. Not good righ’ now.”

He wasn’t sure if George got it, but the hands on his face softened. “I– okay. Okay. Can you tell me what’s wrong? You’re dizzy?”

“Mm.” Dream closed his eyes, which made it so much worse. “Might throw up, I dunno. Don’ want to.”

“Okay, you’re gonna be okay, Dream. What else? Focus on me.”

Dream opened his eyes and found George, hanging onto him like an anchor. He wasn’t sure when his hands had gotten tangled in the front of George’s t-shirt. “Hurts, a lot. My head, and everything else.”

George brushed fingers across his forehead, unsticking sweaty pieces of hair. “I’m sorry, uh– I’m sorry, Dream. That sounds awful. How long ago did you take that Tylenol? It should definitely be working by now.”

Dream groaned, nuzzling down into George’s hand. “Didn’t take it.”

George stared at him. “You didn’t take it?”

“No.” Dream felt very stupid now, stupid and hurting, and it almost brought him to tears. “I jus– wanted you instead.”

George thumbed under his eyes, which was when he realized that he really was crying. “Oh, you silly thing.”

“It was stupid,” Dream whispered, so terribly vulnerable, tucking his fingers into the front of George’s shirt collar.

“Yes, it was. It was a very stupid idea, Dream.” And George’s voice was stern, but his hands were so very soft where they held him behind his ears. “You know you can have both, right? I would have still taken care of you.”

“But you were different.” Dream sniffled, his clogged up nose keeping him from getting a good breath in. “When I was better, you got all– all far away, an’ weird.”

George swallowed, his Adam’s apple moving in the shadow of his jaw. “I’m sorry, I was– I didn’t realize you wanted...me to do this. I was just kind of doing it, you know? And I thought you were too delirious to care. But then you were more normal, and you were still letting me do it, and I just. I wasn’t sure what you wanted.”

“I wan’ you to do it,” Dream mumbled, scooting closer until their noses were almost touching. He was still throbbing, everywhere, but the spinning had stopped because George was holding him – George had him, and George was here, and George could make it all better.

“Okay,” George whispered, like he was scared to speak any louder.

The room drifted in and out of focus, Dream finally lulling towards sleep again, feeling safe in George's hands. This was what he needed, more than anything, even though a Tylenol would probably help a lot right now. He needed the sound of George's breathing, to feel cool air splay out across his cheeks.

"Hold on just a second for me, okay?" George asked, pulling him out of his daze.

He didn't know what that meant, but he nodded anyway. George nodded back, moving his hands, pressing them over Dream's ears with gentle firmness.

"SAPNAP," George yelled, muffled but still making Dream wince a little. He moved his hands. "You okay?" he asked, voice back down to a near whisper.

Dream hummed a yes.

Loud steps came down the hallway and Dream didn't want Sapnap to see him all gooey like this, so he hid in the first place he thought of. It happened to be the hollow of George's throat. Soft palms came around his back, soothing up and down, George's chin resting on his head.

"WHAT?" Sapnap barked from the hall, yelling even though he was already approaching the doorway. His footsteps stopped abruptly. In a stage whisper, he hissed, "what the fuck am I looking at?"

George's hands pressed firmer into Dream's spine, protective. "He's really sick," he whispered. "Can you get the Tylenol and some water?"

Sapnap dropped the snark immediately. "Is he okay?"

"He's fine, he just needs me to stay here right now."

"Why don't you go get the stuff and I'll cuddle him until you get back?"

George's grip tightened again, shooting something fuzzy straight into Dream's bloodstream. "I don't want to wake him. Can't you just get it?"

"Okay, yeah," Sapnap said, after a moment, and then his steps receded down the hall.

When he was gone, Dream nosed up at George's jaw. "M not asleep."

George smoothed the hair at the back of his head. "I know that."

"Why'd you say it then?"

"I just." George shrugged a little. "Didn't want to get up."

Dream didn't push it, content with the scratches George was giving him and the warmth of their shared space. George was right, after all – Dream did need him to stay here. He wouldn't have let him get one leg off the bed. There was something disarming about the way George could sense that.

When Sapnap returned, Dream made a whole show of stretching and blinking his eyes open, giving him a dazed little wave. Sapnap huffed softly and sat on the edge of the bed.

"Hey, buddy. How are you feeling?"

"Like ass," Dream croaked. "Is that for me?"

“Yup.” Sapnap set the water glass on the bedside table and shook two pills from the Tylenol bottle. “I see you’re getting the VIP Gogy treatment. Why didn’t you cuddle me, George?”

“Because you smell,” George said easily. “Here, sleepy, you’ve got to sit up.”

George pulled Dream upright, making the room go spinny for a moment, his head like a bowling ball on his shoulders. He took the pills and water from Sapnap and downed them gratefully.

“Thank you.”

“You’re welcome.” Sapnap patted him on the knee. “I’m kinda worried about you, dude, you look like shit.”

Dream snorted, leaning heavily into George. “Can’t be worse than your corned beef.”

“Hey, now—“

George laughed in shock. “Oh my god, you just got ratioed.”

“This is so not fair,” Sapnap grumbled, shaking his head. “You guys haven’t even *tried* it. I guarantee, at least one of you is gonna eat your fucking words.”

“Won’t be me,” Dream said.

George pushed Dream’s water gently towards his face so he would take another sip. “Won’t be me either, because I am never trying that stuff. It looks like poison.”

Dream drained the glass and George took it from him, setting it down on the table. Sapnap looked between them, eyebrows quirked, but if there was something on his mind he didn’t mention it.

“Whatever. Do you wanna watch a movie, Dream?” he asked instead, picking up the glass and Tylenol bottle to take back downstairs. “I usually like that, to take my mind off how gross I feel. Or do you want to sleep some more?”

Dream shrugged, tipping his head onto George’s shoulder. “I’ll watch a movie. Gimme a few minutes, though, I wanna wait for the medicine to kick in.”

“Course, take all the time you need.” Sapnap got up. “George, you coming?” He looked at the two of them for barely a second before shaking his head. “No, I guess not. Okay, come downstairs when you’re ready.”

“Kay,” Dream said, watching him leave. He flopped back onto the pillows when the room was quiet again.

George looked down at him. Dream made grabby hands. George snorted, moving to lay on the same pillow, and from up close he almost seemed to be blushing.

“How do you feel?” George asked, low and soft.

“A little better,” Dream said. “Can you call me baby again?”

He really didn’t know where that had come from, the warmth and closeness pulling his thoughts straight off his tongue, but George’s mouth parted sweetly and his cheeks were bright pink and Dream didn’t regret a thing.

“Why?” George breathed, smiling a little, like he was trying not to but couldn’t quite manage it.

Dream was tingly all over. "Because I like it."

"I thought it—" George looked away, swallowing and licking his lips, "I thought about saying it, a couple times, but. Doesn't it make you, um, dizzy?"

"It does," Dream said, and when George looked back into his eyes it nearly knocked the breath from his lungs. "That's why I like it."

"Oh."

Dream laughed a little, feeling exposed and a bit fizzy, like if he got shaken up he might explode everywhere.

"Well," George said, "that's good to know."

"Yeah?" Dream asked, lightheaded.

George breathed a quiet laugh through his nose, reaching up to brush Dream's cheek. "You're blushing, baby."

Dream felt his heart skip, his lips parting. "Oh," he said weakly.

"You look so kissable," George murmured, and then his eyes went wide. "Did I just say that?"

Dream's lungs malfunctioned mid-breath, stuttering, turning into a coughing fit that this was *not the time for*. "Sorry—" he choked, eyes watering as he turned away to hack up a lung. George's hand grazed his back hesitantly. "I'm sorry, I—" he coughed again, painful and phlegmy, "this is not what I wanted my response to be."

"What did you want your response to be?" George asked, a little breathless.

Dream turned back to him. "Something smooth," he said.

George flushed pink, looking down at the space between them. "Well, that sounds kind of unrealistic. Do you know yourself, Dream?"

"Ouch. I thought you wanted to kiss me, George. You'd have to think I'm at least a little smooth, right?"

"Mm, not particularly." George reached up to hold Dream's face, still tender but different, somehow. More electric. "You're an idiot, but I want to kiss you anyways."

Dream's brain fried in his skull. "You— I—"

George laughed, the sound so bright Dream wanted to squeeze it. "Very smooth, baby."

He was mush, just a puddle of mush and nothing more, hiding his face in George's neck because he had lost the ability to speak.

"Silly boy. What will we ever do with you?" George asked, playing with his hair.

Dream made an undignified noise.

George hummed, thoughtful. "We'll have to kiss you better, won't we?"

"M sick," Dream said mournfully, and it came out all whiny.

George laughed. "You can't seriously believe that you haven't gotten me sick yet, can you?"

Upon consideration, that was a very good point. Dream peeked his head up, taking in George's grin, the high red of his cheeks. "I'm sorry," he said.

George shook his head, smiling even wider, his eyes so bright and warm. "You really are an idiot. Do you think I would have done all this if I cared about getting sick? No. I don't care, Dream."

Dream touched George's jaw shyly, his heart hammering in his ears. "I guess you'll have to kiss me better, then."

George sighed. "I guess I will. It seems there's nothing else that can be done."

And when George grabbed his waist and leaned in, his head rushed so dizzily he saw static for a moment. He tipped his chin, sliding his fingers up the side of George's soft cheek, and when their lips were just about touching George stopped to glance from his lips to his eyes and back.

"Baby," he whispered, right against Dream's mouth, buzzing and airy and hot.

Dream breathed a sound that was embarrassingly close to a moan and kissed him.

George's lips were warm and soft and fucking devious, kissing him so slow and deep that his fingertips shook. He couldn't breathe, couldn't think, and George's hands were under his shirt on his bare hips, sliding up, up, searing a mark over his ribs that left him aching. He held onto the back of George's neck for dear life. When he gasped, George's tongue slipped into his feverish mouth, licking just a tiny bit before pulling away, and it was nowhere near enough. Dream surged up, rolling on top of George, and let out a breathy noise when he found his tongue again. George laughed low in his throat.

"Greedy," he said into Dream's mouth.

Dream was senseless, mindless, chasing George's lips when he pulled away for air.

"You trying to kill me, pretty boy?"

Dream panted into his neck.

George dragged a hand up the back of Dream's head, breathing hard. "God, you're good at that. How are you so good at that?"

Dream almost whimpered, digging his nose into George's collarbone. "*George.*"

"Oh, you like being called good? I should have seen that coming."

"*Stop.*"

George giggled, half delirious. "Fine, fine, I'll stop before you come in your pants."

Dream jabbed him in the side, hard, making him squeak and squirm under Dream's weight.

"Ow, *Dream*. I hate you."

"I hate you more," Dream said, muffled against his neck.

"And I hate myself," Sapnap said, in the doorway, "for not knocking. Are you guys ready for the movie, or should I go throw up?"

Dream jumped up onto his knees on the bed, mouth flapping dumbly, while George hid his face in his hands and laughed.

“Um. Yeah.” Dream tried for nonchalant and managed to trip over the comforter. “Yeah we– we can do now.”

And so they watched *The Amazing Spider-Man 2*, and the fact that it wasn’t awkward was a true testament to Sapnap’s abilities as a friend. To apologize, Dream and George both tried the corned beef hash.

“What the fuck?” George said with a face of utter betrayal. “Why is it good??”

Sapnap cheered himself hoarse, not even upset when Dream spat his bite back out onto the plate.

“Ew, oh my god it’s *disgusting*.”

“You’re wrong, Dream,” George said, grinning, and Sapnap whooped and ran a lap around the living room.

George and Sapnap both woke up with fevers a few days later. But it was okay, because the world was bright.

And Dream got to show George just how grateful he was for how well he had taken care of him.

Sapnap, the poor soul, got about the same treatment as he had in London.

End Notes

HELLO HELLOOOOO how did you like it??? did you have fun?? i really hope you did because i’m sitting here kicking my feet i’m so excited to release this. it took a long time to write since it turns out working in a cafe is exhausting as fuck, but i’m proud of how it turned out.

i would like to sincerely apologize to sapnap for putting him through the wringer time and time again but don’t worry he’s actually my boyfriend and i make it up to him all the time with cuddles. jokes...i joke...that would be so nice though if it was true. i am a sapnap stan at my core. eN EE WAYSSS i really hope i could bring you at least a little bit of happiness with this fic and if i did i would love to hear about it because positive reinforcement is what i live for i’m like a little puppy dog. kudos and comments are the best way to let me know your thoughts!! and i sit twirling my hair and smiling like an idiot whenever i read what you guys leave for me. so yes.

i hope you are all well and it was a pleasure as always to write for you!! follow me on [twitter](#) if you want fic updates and more deranged content from yours truly :)). love you all, see you again soon! <3

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!